

# House Armed Services Committee

## DEMOCRATS

*For immediate release*

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**Ike Skelton, Ranking Member**

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### **Contact:**

Loren Dealy,  
HASC Democratic Communications  
(202) 226-6339

Lara Battles,  
Rep. Skelton  
(202)-225-2876

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## **Unfunded Requirements for Military Total \$13.8 Billion**

***Washington D.C.—Today Congressman Ike Skelton (MO), Ranking Member on the House Armed Services Committee, announced that \$13.8 billion in military priorities is not funded in the Administration's Fiscal Year 2006 budget request.***

Skelton released the following statement:

“After reviewing the President’s fiscal year 2006 budget request, I asked each service branch for its list of unfunded requirements. These total:

- \$4.778 billion for the Army
- \$3.705 for the Navy
- \$3.155 for the Air Force
- \$2.054 for the Marine Corps

**\$13.692 Total for the four services**

In addition, the Joint Forces Command reported a total of \$98 million in unfunded requirements, for a total of \$13.789 billion

“While I do not expect the Administration’s budget to provide everything requested by the military services, it is imperative that basic requirements, such as recruiting, retention, and basic training, be fully funded. We know the services, especially the Army, are already being stretched thin.

“We should be taking steps now to prevent a recruiting and retention crisis, not waiting for it to happen and then reacting. I am astounded to discover that the Army has identified a shortfall of \$537.5 million in funds needed for recruitment, retention, and initial training to maintain the current force. Even the Navy, which is not being taxed operationally to the same extent as the Army, has identified a \$20 million shortfall in its recruiting budget.

"I continue to be dismayed that the initiative to increase the death gratuity and Service Group Life Insurance (SGLI) benefits that the Administration has requested as part of the FY 2005 supplemental is not continued in the next fiscal year. These long overdue increases are not only the right thing to do, but they will help retention. When one of our soldiers or Marines sees a comrade die, knowing that the victim's family will not be left financially stranded helps lessen the pain and strengthen his or her own bond of service.

"I know the Administration will contend that these funds will be requested in a future supplemental, but I consider that an insufficient answer. The services have identified death gratuity and SGLI requirements – the Army is \$348 million short, while the Marine Corps is \$226 million short. We should fund these requirements now so that our forces do not go to the front line unsure whether their families will be provided for should they be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice.

"There are other critical omissions from the budget request. The Navy needs \$97.6 million more to better secure nuclear weapons. The Marine Corps has identified a \$20 million shortfall in a program to improve our capability to defeat improvised explosive devices. These are high priorities that should be addressed in the budget.

"Fallujah and the Abu Ghraib prison riots have highlighted the need for urban-area and non-lethal weapons, but the Marine Corps list includes a \$14.8 million shortfall in developing these weapons.

"With our military engaged in operations around the world, we cannot afford a recruitment and retention crisis. We also must focus on our near-term weapons and security requirements. Some of the omissions from the President's budget call into question the Administration's budget priorities."

*To receive copies of the individual services' unfunded requirements lists, please contact Loren Dealy at 202-226-6339, or [loren.dealy@mail.house.gov](mailto:loren.dealy@mail.house.gov)*

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